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made her home. While looking through the interstices of leaves and sprays from the other side, to observe the devoted actions of the pair, I discover another oölogist, but with more hostile intentions than the writer. A small striped coachwhip snake has laid the several portions of its lithe body conveniently along the twigs and there remains as motionless as any part of the bush. After watching it for a time, I make various noises to ascertain to what extent it can be affected by sound, and seeing that it does not stir from its resting place, I slightly shake the bush, when it lowers its head, darts out its forked tongue, but seems unwilling to move. Nature has given to its skin the general hue of the bark, and probably it instinctively remains in this position, relying more for protection on the harmony of color and being at rest than upon escape by any other means. Just as I am about to take more vigorous measures for its removal, the bush is struck by a sudden breeze, which appears like a palpable intervention; while the serpent takes advantage of it, and glides through the tangled mass out of reach.

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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS; A. S. PACKARD, JR., AND E. D. COPE.

— The Society of Naturalists of the Eastern United States held its first full meeting in Columbia College, New York, during the Christmas holidays. The aims of this body, so far as they are developed, appear to be to sustain the business aspect of the pursuit of natural science in a material and practical way. The papers read related to the means rather than the ends of the scientific career, no discussion of subjects of pure science being in order. The questions discussed may be classified as follows: (1) The methods of original research. (2) The methods of teaching. (3) The constitution of societies and academies of science. (4) The employment of competent specialists by the educational institutions of the country. In each of these departments much is to be accomplished in this country, and none who attended the meeting failed to gain ideas on these topics. The society has chosen to restrict its geographical range in order to relieve its members of the necessity of traveling long distances, which considerations of time and money render impracticable. It is anticipated that other sections of the country will adopt similar organi-

zations, should they feel the need of them. A committee to define the terms of membership was appointed. The time of holding the annual meeting was fixed for the Christmas holidays as most convenient for teachers.

The goodly attendance and interest shown in the meeting, proved that the City of New York was the most convenient place, and that the holidays are the best time for such a meeting. Members from the leading colleges and museums of New England and the Middle Atlantic States were present, and the sentiment that such a society had an unworked field before it was generally entertained. The topics were in nearly every case of a practical nature, such as the methods of lecturing, of teaching, of laboratory work, of the arrangement of museums, both from a scientific and educational point of view. Biology is to be more and more dependent on exact and careful methods of preparing material for study, and hence a large amount of attention was devoted to histological methods and processes, such as the cutting and staining of microscopic sections, methods used in the microscopic study of rocks and to allied topics. The relations of the original investigator to the public, and the necessity of maintaining academies and institutions for original research was discussed. The society has begun well its work, and will doubtless, by the numbers of applicants for membership which were presented, become a live, zealous and wide-awake body of working men. Its membership should, however, be carefully selected, so that it may not be too unwieldy, and be burdened with too much dead wood.

— It is to be earnestly hoped that the three great national scientific bureaus will obtain due recognition from Congress this winter. We refer of course to the National Museum, the Geological Survey and the Fish Commission. The results of these organizations are doing infinite good in aiding to counteract our utilitarian and non-intellectual tendencies, and the country cannot underestimate the value of the labors, especially of Professor Baird and afterwards of Hayden, Wheeler, King and Powell, in originating and conducting these admirable enterprises.

The disposition of the surplus which the Government is annually accumulating, has become an important question. Congress cannot do better than appropriate it for the advancement of science by fostering those great works which by their nature are too expensive to be undertaken by private persons. The money may be much worse spent.